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The Night Wolf



40 2 6

Chapter 1 by Dhasheta Gunasekaran

For three straight nights George dream about the Night Wolf. It followed him through all over his journey of strange city, trailing after her but didn't get close enough to be threatening.

Chapter 2 by Dhasheta Gunasekaran



The Night Wolf was watching towards George strangely. The funny thing was these was that these dreams weren't like regular ones. He was almost never alone when he dreamed, because Valentine was always there. But there was something different about the Night Wolf dreams, something that made him not want to talk about them. Diya had plenty of secrets in the real world, but he'd never kept one in his dreams before. It was depressing because it meant that, in the end, he wasn't safe anywhere.

The elevator wasn't working again. Diya sighed and started the long walk up four floors. The stairway smelled of mildew and other people's cooking. When he made it to the top, a little out of breath, he fumbled in his pockets for the keys and let himself into the new apartment. It was his least favorite moment of the day. Diya didn't hate the new apartment. It just made him miserable. There were scrapes on the walls and floors from the previous tenant's furniture. A splotchy, stained rug in the hall and

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Diya nodded, not looking at her. Six months, she thought. Wasn't it a year already? No. Half that. Only a few weeks for the world to collapse and leave them stranded in the middle of nowhere. So, another hundred and eighty days to go. Or double that. How much more lost can we get? She piled a couple of pillows on the bed, which was squeezed into the corner of the room. From her overnight bag she removed a stuffed Badtz-Maru and leaned him against the pillows. The worn doll had been a gift from his father on his tenth birthday. Six years later, it still had an honored spot at the head of her bed. For a long minute Diya pretended that he didn't know his mother was standing in the doorway trying to think of something to say. It was another one of those days. All afternoon he'd felt angry or sad or both at once and guilty for feeling any of it. He shouldn't be so attached to the old house, his school, and his friends. He should be bigger than that and hated that he wasn't.

"We'll get past this," said her mother.

Knowing she shouldn't even ask, Diya said,

"Can I use the phone?"

"Diya..."

"I won't call anyone. I just want to check my e-mail."

His mother looked at the floor.

"It's the end of the month. I'm already over our data limit and the few talk minutes left I need to keep for finding work. Can't you use a computer at the library?"

"What library? There aren't any around here. I checked," Diya said. It was a lie. She hadn't checked because she didn't want to know. Before they'd even moved to the city, she'd taken BART to the library at the San Francisco Civic Center a few times, but gave up going a month earlier. A homeless guy followed her to a reading table, where he thumbed through a newspaper. It wasn't a big deal. A smelly guy always followed her when she went in. It wasn't until the man's breathing changed and she realized he was masturbating under the table that she left and never went back. She suspected any library in their run-down neighborhood, the Tenderloin, would be like that, or maybe worse. Throw in a few crackheads with the homeless.

"What about school? Don't they have one you can use?" Diya shook her head.

"The server's dead and the school doesn't have the money to get it fixed."

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